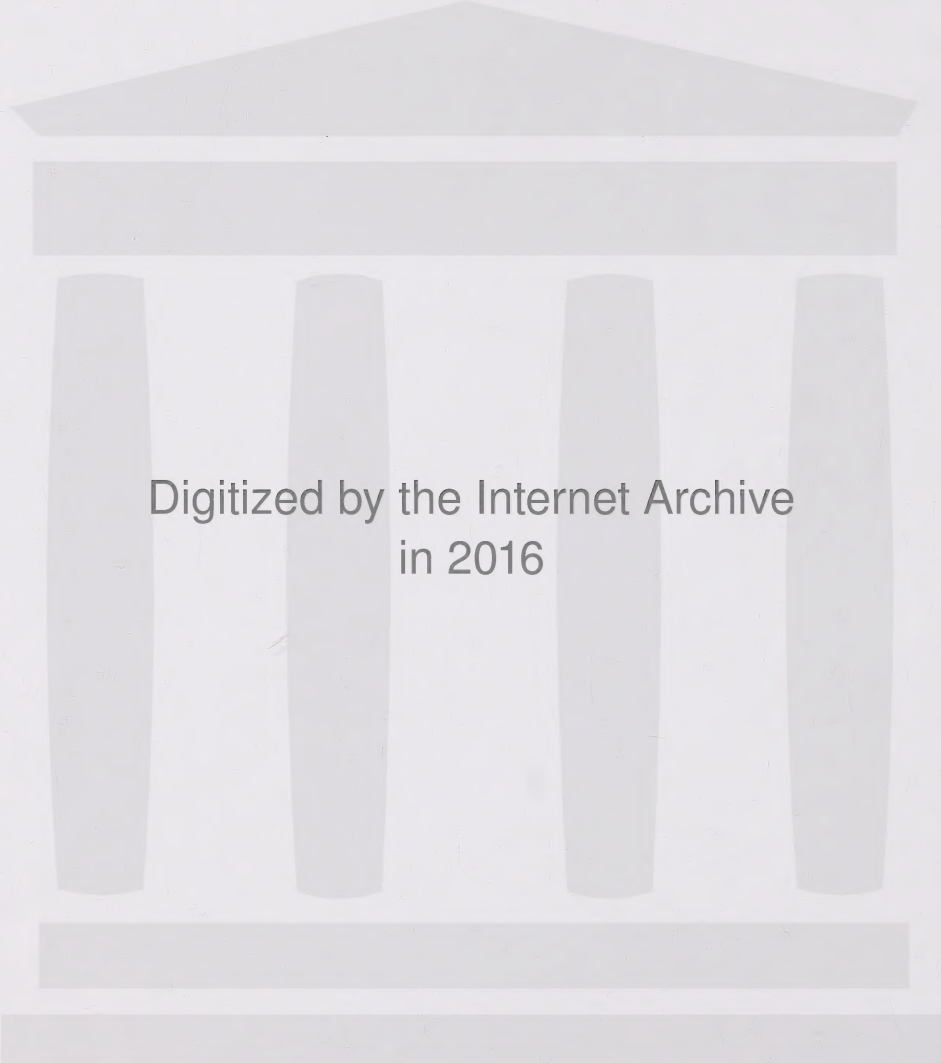


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A Foreign Qualification Recognition Plan for Alberta

Alberta



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Background

Immigrants coming to Alberta have high levels of education. Of the over 15,000 adult immigrants (age 19+) who arrived in our province in 2007, the majority (63%) had completed a university degree, a diploma program or a trade certificate in their home country.¹

“We are moving from exclusion to tolerance, and we have a long way to go to acceptance and valuing talent.”

Employers

Immigrants from all over the world come to Alberta to work and live. They bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience that contribute to our workforce and add to the cultural diversity of our province.

Immigration has been identified as an essential strategy to address both our current and future labour market shortages in Alberta. It is predicted that due to a declining birthrate and an aging population, immigration will account for all of net labour market growth in Canada by 2011.

While Alberta will increasingly rely on immigrants as a major source of skilled workers, there are significant numbers of internationally educated professionals who are currently under-employed. In a recent study,² skilled immigrants in Alberta reported that they did not have employment related to their previous education (45%); that they were overqualified for their current job (49%) and that their home country education and/or work experience was not recognized (64%).

In May 2007, government led a series of roundtable discussions on issues and challenges related to foreign qualification recognition (FQR) with 70 participants representing immigrants/immigrant-serving agencies, employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions.

When asked the question, “What specific actions will result in a significant improvement in the FQR process?” stakeholders were clear that it was more than just a few actions. Success will be realized by developing a system that, while maintaining Alberta’s occupational standards, makes a practice of optimizing the value foreign-trained professionals can add to the Alberta labour force. Given the global competition for skilled labour, many stakeholders felt that Alberta is primed to develop and establish a competitive position for our province by “defining the path for immigrants and making it straighter and shorter.”³

Foreign qualification recognition is all about ensuring that we have the right processes, information and resources to fairly and accurately recognize the knowledge, skills and experience of immigrants. FQR is a complex issue and has a number of inherent challenges.

1 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures, Permanent Resident Dataset, 2008.

2 International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) Assessment Services Study, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, 2007

3 Roundtable Discussions on the Recognition of Foreign Earned Credentials, Skills and Work Experience in Alberta: What We Heard Summary Report, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, 2007.

Challenges

DIVERSITY AND NUMBER OF DECISION MAKERS

In Alberta, there are over 50 professional regulatory organizations, over 25 educational institutions, a number of industry councils and non-government organizations, and numerous employers—each with their own distinct role and impact on the assessment and recognition of foreign-earned credentials and skills. It is very challenging for immigrants to understand and navigate through this complex system.

ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions with the responsibility of assessing foreign education and skills may not have all the information or resources they need to evaluate foreign qualifications. In particular, employers may not have the time or necessary information to assess how educational credentials or work experience from another country compare to occupational standards in Canada.

SKILLED IMMIGRANTS COMING FROM A GREATER RANGE OF COUNTRIES

Employment outcomes are more favourable for skilled immigrants from English speaking countries and from countries where recognition of educational systems has been firmly established such as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Ireland.⁴ Canada, similar to other western countries, is increasingly welcoming immigrants from non-traditional countries like China, India and the Philippines where the education and occupational systems may not be as well understood.

CONSISTENT ASSESSMENT/RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN CREDENTIALS

It is not unusual for immigrants to be given inconsistent information about the recognition of their foreign qualifications as FQR decision makers tend to function independently with limited collaboration. There is a need for structural mechanisms and best practice models to promote information sharing and coordination among FQR decision makers.

AN OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE FQR PROCESS

To ensure immigrant qualifications are evaluated appropriately, the concepts of fair, open and transparent processes are written directly into the professional regulatory statutes and regulations. However, because FQR is an internal assessment process that occurs within an organization (employer, professional regulatory organization or educational institution), the standards and methodology used are often not clearly understood by or made available to outside groups. This has resulted in the perception by some observers that the process is biased and unfair.

⁴ Labour Market Outcomes for Migrant Professionals: Canada and Australia Compared, L. Hawthorne, Statistics Canada, 2007.

FQR Plan for Alberta



Plan Overview

A Foreign Qualification Recognition Plan for Alberta is an integral component of our 'Made-in-Alberta' immigration approach. It identifies collaborative and strategic actions that will help our province make significant progress towards improving the labour market success of immigrants. The plan supports and enhances other key government strategies including *Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce* and *Supporting Immigrants and Immigration to Alberta*.

This FQR plan is based on a comprehensive systems approach that links key stakeholders to the critical strategic actions that affect the successful labour market integration of immigrants.

STAKEHOLDERS

The plan incorporates and recognizes the critical role of employers, educational institutions, professional regulatory organizations and immigrant-serving agencies in the labour market integration of immigrants. Immigrants with foreign qualifications essentially need to pass through one or a combination of these stakeholders in order to successfully enter the labour market in Alberta.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The plan is focused on three strategic areas:

1

Specialized Information: Actions that would ensure immigrants have easy access to current, accurate and understandable information about the steps they need to go through to obtain recognition of their foreign credentials.

2

Assessment Standards and Resources: Actions that would help to ensure the assessment of foreign qualifications is transparent, fair and accountable and based on current and accurate information.

3

Bridging the Gaps: Actions that would ensure there are appropriate programs to bridge gaps between the qualifications presented by immigrants and the standards required to enter the workplace, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions. Timely and accessible bridging and mentoring programs are available to address those gaps.

LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

The plan is focused towards making significant progress and achieving substantial results on the following desired outcome:

Immigrants will have the opportunity to fully use their education, skills and work experience for the benefit of themselves and the Alberta economy.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The plan is intended to create a cycle of continuous and on-going improvement in the foreign qualifications recognition system in Alberta. Both short-term and long-term outcomes and performance measures are identified within the plan. Performance on these measures will be reviewed and monitored by government and stakeholders to guide further improvements or initiatives.

Alberta Government's Role

During the roundtable discussions, immigrants, employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions indicated that leadership and coordination are central to creating an open and effective environment for the successful integration of foreign-trained immigrants into Alberta's labour market.

Many stakeholders reported that the current system for foreign qualifications recognition in Alberta was fragmented, overly complicated and disjointed. They indicated that for an Alberta FQR plan to be successful there needs to be a high level of collaboration between and across stakeholder groups and that the Alberta government needs to take a leadership role.



Key players have existed in solitude and do not communicate or collaborate – like a triangle with three sides facing each other but not connecting.

For the Government of Alberta, the guiding principles underlying the FQR plan are:

- ▶ Facilitate the labour market integration of skilled immigrants while maintaining Alberta's occupational and licensing standards.
- ▶ Ensure that immigrants receive timely and equitable recognition of their credentials, skills and work experience.
- ▶ Promote a collaborative and supportive environment, with respect for the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in foreign qualification recognition.
- ▶ Promote continuous improvement in the FQR process in Alberta by ensuring that accountabilities are clear, measures for success are identified and outcomes link to improved labour market integration for immigrants.

The plan recognizes that FQR is a shared responsibility. The Alberta government is committed to ensuring we have the right mechanisms and tools to support all of our stakeholders – employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions – so they can make efficient and accurate decisions about foreign qualifications. Although government is not a 'FQR decision maker', it has a leadership role to play in supporting the development of appropriate FQR resources; promoting coordination and information exchange within and between stakeholder groups; ensuring appropriate levels of accountability; and that indicators of success are identified and outcomes are measured.

What We Want to Achieve

Information related to FQR is shared within and across stakeholder groups. FQR processes are streamlined and coordinated. Levels of accountability are clear and outcomes are measured. Outcomes are linked back to stakeholders to ensure continuous system improvement.

WHAT WE WILL DO

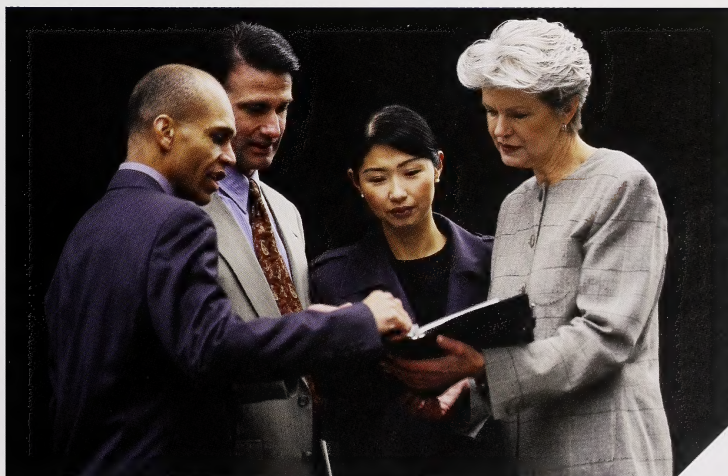
Establish a Foreign Qualification Innovation Fund to support stakeholders in developing the tools and resources they need to improve foreign qualification recognition. Stakeholders will be awarded funding to support their activities and build their capacity in the three strategic areas of the plan: Specialized Information; Assessment Standards and Resources; and Bridging the Gap.

Improve Coordination and Information Exchange on issues and best practices related to foreign qualification recognition within and across professional regulatory organizations, educational institutions, employers and immigrant-serving agencies.

- ▶ Link and collaborate with existing leadership councils, organizations and forums to promote the FQR plan.
- ▶ Establish, as required, stakeholder steering committees and working groups to support FQR actions and to promote improved coordination and information exchange.
- ▶ Organize stakeholder forums to develop and share information on best practices related to FQR within and between stakeholder groups.

“Based on our experiences, we feel clients are able to find appropriate employment and have credentials recognized when they have access to a centre or clearing house that will give them all the information needed to fast track them, keep them focused, tell them what is needed, and show them their options.”

Immigrant serving agency



WHAT WE WILL DO (continued)

Ensure Accountability and Continuous Improvement through an FQR unit within Alberta Employment and Immigration to support the implementation and monitoring of the FQR plan. The FQR unit will:

- ▶ Work collaboratively across government ministries and with stakeholders to coordinate the implementation of the FQR plan.
- ▶ Develop the criteria and process for funding stakeholders under the Foreign Qualification Innovation Fund, in consultation with other government departments.
- ▶ Ensure the development of appropriate outcome and performance measures for the FQR plan. Ensure strategic data collection on performance measures and outcomes.
- ▶ Identify emerging issues for the FQR plan.

STRATEGIC THEMES FOR ACTION

This Foreign Qualification Recognition Plan for Alberta identifies three strategic action themes:

- ▶ **Specialized Information;**
- ▶ **Assessment Standards and Resources; and**
- ▶ **Bridging the Gap**





Specialized Information

THE CHALLENGE

During the roundtable consultations in May 2007, it was clear many stakeholders had already developed good information resources and tools to support FQR. However, many stakeholders were not aware of these existing information resources and there were few mechanisms to support sharing. Immigrants, employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions said that it was difficult to obtain accurate, reliable and consistent information about the steps and processes required for the recognition of foreign qualifications in Alberta.

Stakeholders indicated there was an abundance of information, but that it was scattered across multiple sources and that it was often inconsistent. Immigrants indicated that it was difficult to obtain information on the professional licensing process and the steps they needed to take to obtain recognition of their qualifications. Almost unanimously, immigrants, employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions indicated a need for a centralized information repository that would help immigrants and stakeholders navigate the pathways required for FQR and access the services and programs available to support them.

“Government needs one independent body that would do assessment of my portfolio and give me advice on where I need to go – focus my efforts in the right direction so I don’t have to go to multiple places to get information.”

Immigrant

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Immigrants have easy access to current, accurate and understandable information on the steps to recognize their foreign qualifications in Alberta. Prospective immigrants have access to this information to support informed decision-making and pre-arrival preparation. Employers, professional regulatory organizations, educational institutions and immigrant-serving agencies have access to high quality information tools and resources to assist them in the FQR process.

ACTIONS FOR SPECIALIZED INFORMATION

Action 1

Provide an information channel through the Immigrate to Alberta web portal to maintain and disseminate a comprehensive inventory of information related to foreign qualification recognition in Alberta.

- ▶ For prospective immigrants and newcomers: Provide accurate, current and clear information on the foreign qualification recognition process to enable them to make informed decisions on living and working in Alberta. Provide linkages that help immigrants understand the educational system in Alberta.
- ▶ For stakeholders: Support access to web-based information tools and resources that support immigrant-serving agencies, employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions in their roles related to foreign qualification recognition.

Action 2

Enhance and develop information tools, resources and services related to foreign qualification recognition to meet the needs of immigrants and stakeholders. Information tools or resources will be linked to the web portal to be shared on a system-wide basis and through face-to-face information service delivery centres, such as Labour Market Information Centres.

- ▶ For immigrants: Strengthen immigrant information and employment counselling services by aligning existing services and, where appropriate, develop new service models.
- ▶ For stakeholders: Consolidate and maintain a repository of information on foreign qualification recognition processes and best practice tools and resources, such as work experience programs, mentoring programs, options for career bridging, ESL resources and workplace diversity.
- ▶ Support the development of clear, accurate and understandable information on the accreditation process through the development of 'Professional Accreditation Fact Sheets' that provide comprehensive information on the steps immigrants are required to take to obtain recognition of their foreign qualifications for accreditation in Alberta.



Assessment Standards and Resources

THE CHALLENGE

Professional regulatory organizations have a legislated responsibility to ensure that all applicants, including the foreign-trained, meet the standards required for safe and competent practice. Educational institutions have a responsibility to ensure that foreign-trained applicants meet the admission and/or transfer credit standards within their institution. Employers need to know whether foreign-trained applicants have the competencies required for a particular job.

FQR is not about lowering the standards required for competent practice or entry into an educational institution in Alberta. Rather, it is about ensuring we are able to evaluate foreign qualifications to Alberta standards in an accurate, fair and transparent manner.

“Any foreign qualification recognition plan must take into account the national standards of some professional regulatory organizations.”

Professional regulatory organizations

During the roundtable consultations in May 2007, stakeholders identified a number of challenges in the assessment of foreign qualifications including:

- ▶ An increase in the number and diversity of international applications. Stakeholders indicated that in some cases, they did not have the resources to collect the necessary information and conduct the research required for some foreign qualifications.
- ▶ No mechanism to share information about foreign qualifications and how they compare to Alberta standards on a system-wide basis. Educational institutions, in particular, noted that a centralized information resource on foreign qualifications would reduce redundant research efforts and improve efficiency and consistency.
- ▶ The standards and methodology used to evaluate foreign-earned qualifications are not always clearly specified or made available to other groups that have a significant interest in the outcome, such as immigrants. Many participants at the roundtable discussions felt strongly that more openness in the assessment process used by professional regulatory organizations is needed. To ensure transparency, there needs to be a better understanding of the number of applicants from other countries that professional regulatory organizations are assessing, which of these applicants is meeting the standards for licensing and in cases where applicants are not meeting the standards, where they are falling short.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

The assessment of foreign qualifications follows principles of transparency, fairness and accountability. Assessments are based on accurate and current information. Alberta standards are upheld.

ACTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT STANDARDS AND RESOURCES

Action 3

Strengthen the reporting by professional regulatory organizations on the foreign qualifications they evaluate and how these qualifications compare to standards in Alberta. This action will require professional regulatory organizations to provide information to government annually on:

- ▶ The number of foreign-trained applicants by country
- ▶ The number of applicants who are unsuccessful in meeting the registration requirements in each of the following areas (where applicable): educational standards, English language standards, examinations and work/clinical experience requirements.
- ▶ The average time required for foreign-trained applicants to obtain a registration decision.
- ▶ The number of appeals by foreign-trained applicants.

The Alberta government will consult with professional regulatory organizations to identify the most appropriate reporting mechanisms and processes.

Action 4

Government will review the assessment information provided in Action 3 to support the development of best practices and assessment tools and resources. This information will also support the development of bridging programs and a review of appeal processes. More specifically, government will use these reports to:

- ▶ Inform and support the further development of best practice models for the assessment of foreign qualifications and the sharing of these best practice models across the licensing system.
- ▶ Strategically target the development of assessment tools and resources to support professional regulatory organizations in the foreign qualification assessment process.
- ▶ Identify the most appropriate 'bridge to licensure' programs required to bridge foreign-trained applicants to the licensing standards in Alberta.
- ▶ Support the development of good practice standards for appeals available to foreign-trained applicants.

Action 5

Support professional regulatory organizations in developing streamlined, innovative and flexible approaches to the recognition of foreign-earned qualifications.

- ▶ Through targeted use of the Foreign Qualification Innovation Fund, the Alberta government will provide support to professional regulatory organizations to further increase the level of innovation, efficiency and flexibility in the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications.

Action 6

Expand the information resources on foreign educational systems and credentials available to employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions.

- ▶ Provide stakeholders with online access to *International Education Guides*. These guides will provide comprehensive information on educational systems in other countries and indicate how foreign credentials from these countries compare to educational standards in Alberta.
- ▶ Provide workshops and information sessions on best practices related to foreign credential evaluation and on the educational systems in other countries to all stakeholders.

Action 7

Enhance information resources and tools to support foreign qualification recognition for skilled trades in Alberta.

- ▶ Improve the visibility and expand the scope of online resources for skilled trades already available to employers and immigrants.
- ▶ Develop practice qualification exams in several high demand skilled trades. Practice exams will be made available online and will be an important tool for domestic and foreign workers and employers.
- ▶ Support credential benchmarking research regarding certification and training systems for skilled trades in other international jurisdictions.



Bridging the Gaps

THE CHALLENGE

“English fluency skills are significant factors affecting student success. In the area of employment, language proficiency affects safety and is a key job readiness competency that cannot be underemphasized.”

Post-secondary institutions

During the roundtable discussions, some stakeholders stressed that Alberta needs to take a fundamentally different approach to foreign qualification recognition. It should not be an all or nothing “you’re in or you’re out” approach but rather focus on how immigrants can successfully “bridge the gap” to meet the standards in Alberta. All stakeholders agreed that bridging programs are critical to fully integrate foreign-trained professionals into the workforce.

Stakeholders indicated that the demand for occupation-specific bridging programs for skilled immigrants exceeds supply. They also indicated that it was important that immigrants be given the opportunity to work in their field as quickly as possible and that work experience or mentorship programs may help to fast-track their entry into the labour market.

Employers indicated they would like support in developing tools and bridging programs that would help them attract, integrate and retain immigrants in their workplace. Employers in particular said that there needed to be a higher level of awareness and support within their organization on the value that immigrants can bring to the workplace. English language proficiency was identified as a major factor affecting the successful transition of immigrants.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Immigrants can effectively acquire the knowledge and skills to meet Alberta's standards. Employers include immigrants in the labour force.

ACTIONS FOR BRIDGING THE GAPS

Action 8

Support increased development of bridging programs that either bridge to licensure or to professional qualifications, preparing foreign-trained immigrants to meet professional qualification standards in Alberta.

- ▶ Support the development of approved academic bridging programs, which help foreign-trained immigrants bridge to the professional standards required in occupations that (1) are relevant to the immigrants' existing qualifications and (2) have high labour market demand. Academic bridging programs include:
 - ▶ Content specific to the occupation in the Canadian context
 - ▶ Professional-level language training and resources that help immigrants meet the language requirements for the occupation
 - ▶ Coaching and resources that help immigrants prepare for professional qualification examinations

Action 9

Enhance bridge to employment programming to facilitate immigrants' access to, and participation in, the labour market.

- ▶ Strategically target funding for existing or new bridge to work programs to meet labour market needs.
- ▶ Support the development of modularized programming, using various media, to increase the participation of newcomers in the labour market.
- ▶ Support the Immigrant Access Fund to help immigrants to access employment or to obtain Canadian accreditation.

Action 10

Engage and support employers to enhance their ability to integrate and retain immigrants.

- ▶ Support the development of workplace internship, Canadian work experience and mentorship programs, and other innovative approaches to facilitate the entry of skilled immigrants into the workforce.
- ▶ Develop and promote workshops, resources tools and best practices highlighting the importance of diversity in the workplace.
- ▶ Identify and engage industry champions to promote and increase awareness of the benefits of immigrant integration into the economy.

Ensuring Success and Continuous Improvement

A high level implementation plan has been developed for the plan (see Appendix 1). The implementation plan identifies the main activities and the timelines required to support each of the actions. Given the extensive scope of some of the action items, it is anticipated that a time frame of up to three years will be required for the full implementation of the plan.

Appendix 2 identifies performance measures to monitor progress against the desired outcomes. Subject to further refinement, these measures will be used by government and stakeholders to strategically identify future improvements.

Appendix 1 – Overview of Implementation

ACTIONS	ACTIVITIES	TARGET COMPLETION TIMES		
		Currently underway/ Short-Term (6 months)	Medium-Term (1 year)	Long-Term (2 years)
GOVERNMENT ROLE:				
Establish a Foreign Qualification Innovation Fund	Develop criteria and process for funding in consultation with other government departments and stakeholders	✓		
	Award FQR Innovation Funding		✓	(on-going)
Improve Coordination and Information Exchange	Expand and maintain FQR Steering Committee	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
Ensure Accountability and Continuous Improvement	FQR Unit established within government to support the implementation and monitoring of the FQR plan	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
FQR PLAN:				
1. Provide an information channel through the Immigrate to Alberta web portal to maintain and disseminate a comprehensive inventory of information related to foreign qualification recognition in Alberta	Link existing information on foreign qualification recognition to the Alberta web portal	✓		
	Enhance links to additional FQR resources as they are developed.	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
2. Enhance and develop the resources and services available to meet the information needs of immigrants and stakeholders on foreign qualification recognition. Information tools or resources will be linked to the web portal to be shared on a system-wide basis and through face-to-face information service delivery centres				
a) For immigrants: Strengthen immigrant information and employment counseling services through a realignment of existing services and, where appropriate, through the development of new service models	Review current models for the provision of immigrant information and career counselling services and make recommendations for improvements as part of the implementation of Connecting Learning and Work		✓	
	Review current models providing immigrant information and career and employment services and make recommendations for enhancing and developing tools, resources and services as part of implementing the Connecting Learning and Work		✓	(on-going)
b) For stakeholders: Consolidate and maintain a repository of information on foreign qualification recognition processes and best practice tools and resources	Information maintained on web portal. Initial scan of available resources and tools for consolidation on the Alberta-Canada Immigration web portal	✓		
	On-going maintenance and development of new tools/resources as needed	✓	✓	(on-going)
c) Support development of clear, accurate and understandable information on the accreditation process	Develop template for information fact sheets on professional licensing	✓		
	Complete Fact Sheets for majority of professional regulatory organizations		✓	
3. Strengthen the reporting by professional regulatory organizations on the foreign qualifications they evaluate and how these compare to standards in Alberta	Consultation with professional regulatory organizations to identify reporting mechanisms and processes	✓		
	Implement new reporting requirements		✓	(on-going)
4. Government will review the licensing information provided in Action 3 to support the development of best practices and assessment tools and resources	Working group established to review licensing reports and identify strategic areas for further action		✓	(on-going)
5. Support in developing streamlined, innovative and flexible approaches to the recognition of foreign-earned qualifications	Consultation within government and professional regulatory organizations to develop funding criteria	✓		
	Implement FQR Innovation Funding for professional regulatory organizations	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)

ACTIONS	ACTIVITIES	TARGET COMPLETION TIMES		
		Currently underway/ Short-Term (6 months)	Medium-Term (1 year)	Long-Term (2 years)
6. Expand the information resources on foreign educational systems and credentials available to employers, professional regulatory organizations and educational institutions	Develop information resources on foreign educational systems and credentials	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
	Develop and deliver workshops on foreign qualification recognition to stakeholders	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
7. Enhance information resources and tools to support foreign qualification recognition in the skilled trades				
a) Improve the visibility and expand the scope of online resources for skilled trades already available to employers and immigrants	Raise profile of information for foreign and landed immigrant workers on AIT website		✓	
	Update information on website regarding foreign and domestic workers focusing on the needs of specific user groups e.g. foreign worker, employer, labour broker, etc.		✓	
	Provide online information describing best practices for foreign worker recruitment in the skilled trades		✓	
b) Develop practice certification exams in several high demand skilled trades. Practice exams will be made available online and will be an important tool for domestic and foreign skilled trades workers and employers	Development of online practice exams for highest demand trades	✓	✓	
	Development of online study guides linking practice exams, glossary of terms, resources, trade scope documents, etc.	✓		
c) Support credential benchmarking research regarding certification and training systems for skilled trades in other international jurisdictions	Support the work of the Construction Sector Council and B.C. Industry Training Authority regarding the benchmarking of foreign trained workers against the red seal standard			✓
8. Support increased development of bridging programs that either bridge to licensure or to professional qualifications, preparing foreign-trained immigrants to meet professional qualification standards in Alberta	Develop criteria for approval of bridging programs		✓	(on-going)
	Develop bridging programs within the advanced education system		✓	(on-going)
9. Enhance bridge to employment programming to facilitate immigrants' access to, and participation in, the labour market				
a) Strategically target funding for existing or new bridge to work programs to meet labour market needs	Review and evaluate current bridging programs to ensure alignment with labour market need. Develop program policy as required	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
b) Support the development of modularized programming, using various media, to increase the participation of newcomers in the labour market	Review current programs and identify potential areas for the development of modularized programming. Develop and implement modularized programs			✓
c) Support the Immigrant Access Fund to help immigrants access employment or obtain Canadian accreditation	Completed	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
10. Engage and support employers to enhance their ability to integrate and retain immigrants				
a) Support the development of workplace internship, Canadian work experience and mentorship programs, and other innovative approaches to facilitate the entry of skilled immigrants into the workforce	Review and identify employer information and resource needs to support immigrant integration. Develop tools and resources as required	✓	✓	(on-going)
b) Develop and promote workshops, resource tools and best practices highlighting the importance of diversity in the workplace	Develop and deliver workshops to employers on immigrant integration into the workplace	✓	✓	(on-going)
c) Identify and engage industry champions to promote and increase awareness of the benefits of immigrant integration into the economy	Outreach to geographic and industry sector groups through established networks and partnerships (e.g. Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce sub-strategies, Regional Economic Development Authorities)	✓	(on-going)	(on-going)
	Support the establishment of urban immigrant employment councils		✓	(on-going)

Appendix 2 – Proposed Performance Measures

STRATEGIC ACTION	OUTCOMES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES ²
Specialized Information	<p>Immigrants have easy access to current, accurate and understandable information on the steps to recognize their foreign qualifications in Alberta.</p> <p>Prospective immigrants have access to this information to support informed decision-making and pre-arrival preparation.</p> <p>Employers, professional regulatory organizations, educational institutions and immigrant-serving agencies have access to high quality information tools and resources to assist them in the FQR process.</p>	<p>Number of hits on the FQR information on the Immigration to Alberta web portal.</p> <p>Percentage of clients aware of the information and supports available to them.</p> <p>Percentage of clients satisfied with the information and supports provided.</p> <p>Percentage of stakeholders aware of the information and supports available to them.</p> <p>Percentage of stakeholders satisfied with the information and supports provided.</p>
Assessment Standards and Resources	<p>The assessment of foreign qualifications follows principles of transparency, fairness and accountability.</p> <p>Assessments are based on accurate and current information.</p> <p>Alberta standards are upheld.</p>	<p>Number of complete reports provided by accreditation organizations.</p> <p>Number of stakeholders who access International Educational Guides and find them useful.</p> <p>Number of stakeholders attending International Education Guide workshops.</p> <p>Number of trades online practice exams and online study guides accessed.</p>
Bridging the Gap	<p>Immigrants can effectively acquire the knowledge and skills to meet Alberta's standards.</p> <p>Employers fully utilize immigrants in the labour force.</p>	<p>Number of bridging programs that target occupations with high labour market demand.</p> <p>Percentage of clients fully employed in an area related to their qualifications post-intervention.</p> <p>Number and percentage of bridging program graduates who meet accreditation standards.</p> <p>Number of employers engaged in community-based immigration employment forums.</p>
Overall Objective	<p>Immigrants will have the opportunity to fully use their education, skills and work experience for the benefit of themselves and the Alberta economy.</p>	<p>Immigrants with employment related to their previous education.¹</p> <p>Immigrants who do not feel overqualified for their current job.¹</p>

* An interim report on progress of actions will be compiled for May 2009 followed by a progress report containing baseline data in April 2010.

¹ Can be captured through the IQAS Assessment Services Study

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Alberta